

**Progress Report  
Lower Passaic River Restoration Project  
June 2005**

The Lower Passaic River Restoration Project is a complex study with many components. We realize that it can be difficult for our stakeholders to determine what the partner agencies are working on and whether any progress is being made. We prefer to hold Project Delivery Team (PDT) and Work Group meetings to keep you involved, but we're finding that meetings are difficult to schedule in the summer months. As an alternative, we've developed this Progress Report to keep you informed of activities and progress. This is something new, so we would appreciate your feedback. This is not a substitute for meeting with you to talk about the project. We are committed to continue holding PDT meetings, but in the meantime, we thought you might like to bring this two-page summary with you to read on the beach or wherever you happen to be relaxing.

**Sampling Efforts**

The Sampling Work Group is hard at work reviewing documents that will guide the sediment coring and water quality sampling planned for later this summer and fall. Those documents are the Field Sampling Plan Volume 1, Quality Assurance Project Plan and Work Plan. Since the drafts came out on April 8, comments have been pouring in with excellent suggestions on how to improve the sampling program. We are working on revising the documents.

In the meantime, there is some early sampling occurring to give us information on the physical characteristics of the river. This physical data will be used to choose locations of the sediment cores that will be collected later this summer and analyzed for a variety of contaminants.

*Geophysical Program:* Surface sediment texture and sub-surface geology are being assessed through side-scan sonar and sub-bottom profiling. The results of these instrument readings are being confirmed by collecting 275 shallow cores and 50 deep cores for analysis of geologic properties.

*Sedflume/Microcosm Program:* Experiments were conducted to test sediment stability. Fifteen cores were collected from a variety of locations chosen to represent different conditions in the river. The cores were eroded through a Microcosm device that is sensitive enough to measure small changes in stresses that erode surface sediment and a Sedflume device that measures larger changes in stresses that erode deeper sediments.

*Hydrodynamic Monitoring Program:* Instruments remain stationed in the river, continuously collecting various hydrodynamic data, such as turbidity, conductivity, temperature and river currents. These data will help predict how contaminants move in the river and how sediments might be resuspended during the dredging pilot.

We will be receiving results from these sampling efforts at the end of July, so a Sampling Work Group meeting is now scheduled on August 10 to review the data and choose locations for the sediment coring program.

### **Restoration Site Screening**

A Restoration Workshop was held on May 18. The purpose of this Workshop was to agree by consensus on the approach we will be taking to evaluate restoration opportunities within the Study Area. The Study's Goals and Objectives were discussed, as well as the associated sampling strategies and functional assessment methods to aid in evaluating them at the potential sites. The results of these discussions will be used as input into a Restoration Opportunities Report that will be available in August.

### **Environmental Dredging and Sediment Decontamination Pilot**

Planning continues on the Dredging and Decontamination Pilot, now scheduled to take place in October. The request for proposals from dredgers interested in carrying out the pilot will be posted on the New Jersey Department of Transportation web site in July. The Hydrodynamic Modeling Report, that is being used to plan where to put water column monitoring equipment during the dredging pilot and predict the impact of dredging on the river, was posted on [www.ourPassaic.org](http://www.ourPassaic.org) on May 16. Up next will be the Dredging Pilot Work Plan, expected to be available the first week in July. A Dredging Pilot Work Group meeting is scheduled for July 27 to discuss the work plan.

### **Modeling Plan**

The draft Modeling Plan was released on April 21 for review by the Modeling Work Group. We are compiling their comments and revising the plans. In the meantime, work has begun on the hydrodynamic portion of the model, which simulates how the water moves in the Passaic River and Newark Bay.

### **Risk Assessment**

The Pathways Analysis Report will be posted on [www.ourPassaic.org](http://www.ourPassaic.org) in July. This is the overview of how the human health and ecological risk assessments will be conducted.

### **Community Involvement and Public Outreach**

The draft Community Involvement Plan will be released in July. This plan provides a tool box of outreach methods that we can use throughout the project to communicate with stakeholders. We are planning for public forums in August to discuss the draft plan. We will also take the opportunity during these informal sessions to talk to the public about major upcoming tasks, such as the Dredging and Decontamination Pilot and sediment coring work.

Planning is underway for a Public Scoping meeting in the fall. This is a formal meeting where all of the partner agencies will make presentations on the Lower Passaic River Restoration Project and get feedback from the public on our plans. This scoping meeting is required under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), but we are also excited to have this opportunity to reach out to as wide an audience as possible to talk about the work we've been doing.